



Credit Hour Policy

National University recently merged with John F. Kennedy University and Northcentral University with the goal of providing a more holistic approach to student success and degree offerings to support the “Whole Human Education” experience. In part, due to this merger of three universities, National University currently offers degree plans that use “quarter” credit hours and degree plans that use “semester” credit hours. NU is working to consolidate all degree offerings using semester credit hours. Until then, students will need to refer to the university course catalog or speak with their academic advisor to confirm if their degree plan utilizes quarter or semester credit hours.

Semester Credit Hours

NU courses that award credits earned based on semester credits mostly carry 3-semester credits. It is expected that a student taking a 3-credit semester course will need to spend approximately 135-144 hours on learning experiences such as reading and study; research; faculty-student interaction; demonstration of defined learning outcomes through assignments, papers and projects; examinations; and assessment of performance.

Quarter Credit Hours

Courses designed using quarter credit hours divide the academic year into four 12-week quarters, each comprised of three 4-week classes. Under the current policy, 4.5 units of credit are awarded for courses.

Contact Hours: WSCUC accredited, undergraduate courses require 1 hour of classroom instruction (also known as direct faculty instruction or contact hours, including substantive interaction) and a minimum of 2 hours of out-of-class (non-contact hour) student work, per credit hour, each week for 10-12 weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. (Note - If the accreditor updates this requirement, the following will be revised.)

At National University, this means that a typical, 4.5 credit hour course taught over 4 weeks, must include at least 2,700 minutes (45 hours) of student contact time spent "in" the course. (For fewer credits, divide these numbers appropriately; for more credits, multiply these numbers appropriately. Courses longer than 4-weeks will see these numbers spread over time.) This student-content, student-student, and/or student-professor interaction typically involves students working in the LMS itself. In the 4-week, 4.5 credit hour course model used at NU, this means that students should spend just over 11 hours per week working in and with fellow students, instructors, and course content such as discussions, simulations, watching videos, etc., (For more assistance with considering how to strategize timing for an online course, see Appendix.)

Non-Contact Hours: WSCUC expects individual programs and/or departments to make determinations above and beyond the base timeframe (called non-contact hours) with a minimum requirement of 2 hours of non-contact time for every 1 hour of contact time. (Ex: A typical week for a National University undergraduate student should see approximately 11 hours of “in class” work with at least 22 hours of reading, writing papers, creating presentations, and other homework, etc.) Course Authors should seek guidance from department stakeholders for other non-contact expectations.